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Letter from John Muir to Maggie Lauder [Reid], 1873 Mar 1.

John Muir

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(The original in possession of Mrs. A.B.Coleman, Berkeley, California.)

Yosemite Valley,
March 1st., 1873.

My dear Maggie Lauder:

I am told that you placed all the world under still greater obligation by giving it another baby. And David and Katie, too, and Dan's. Jupiter! What an irrepressible onset of babies. Here you interrupt my exclamations by demanding the measure of progress made by myself as a lover of the world's welfare in a similar way. I must answer, "Very little, for 'my love is but a lassie yet,' -- only five years old. "Only that." Yet I might have been more advanced, for not to mention many matrimonial possibilities, I was actually offered "a lass wi' a tocker (dowry)". But I must draw my pen out of that subject.

I hope to return to your midst after my mountain wanderings are past, to behold all of the old faces and the new.

I am sure that you and John must feel amazingly wealthy by this time. I trust that all your widening circle of little ones and big ones may be blessed of heaven, and be made to feel how glorious is the gift of life in this beauty-filled world.

Do you ever hope, My Maggie, to come hither? Some of the words of our Heavenly Father are more distinctly seen in these grand characters of mountains and waterfalls than in any others. Yet whatever we can read in all the world is contained in that sentence of boundless meaning, "God is Love." This is the sum and substance of all that the sunshine utters, and all that is spoken by the calms and storms of the mountains, and by what we call terrible earthquakes and furious torrents, and wild beating tones of the ocean.

All these manifestations are but forms of that one bible utterance, "God is Love."

I would like to take you and Sarah husbandless and babyless away back into the mountains to stroll free and alone as when we used to make excursions around "The Lake."

What a world of wonders every individual day would be. For hours and hours you would forget your homes and husbands and children, and in rare times regard them as trifles. I am sure of that, my lassie.

It seems too bad that every year I should guide strangers to the dearest sanctuaries of the Sierras, and not one of my own kin. But who knows what paths our feet may yet travel.

I am comfortable with books and a warm nook and abundance of bread. The greatest of the Falls ever before me in front of my window where I sit in writing or reading. My scythe ticks on the table, and my bed in the corner, clean and sweet-smelling, made of sugar pine, tips me out in good time in the morning.

Goodbye, my Maggie, for my sheet is full. This makes six full letters I have written today, and I have one or two more to write before retiring. You are all dear to me. Give my love to all. I am always

Yours lovingly,

JOHN MUIR.